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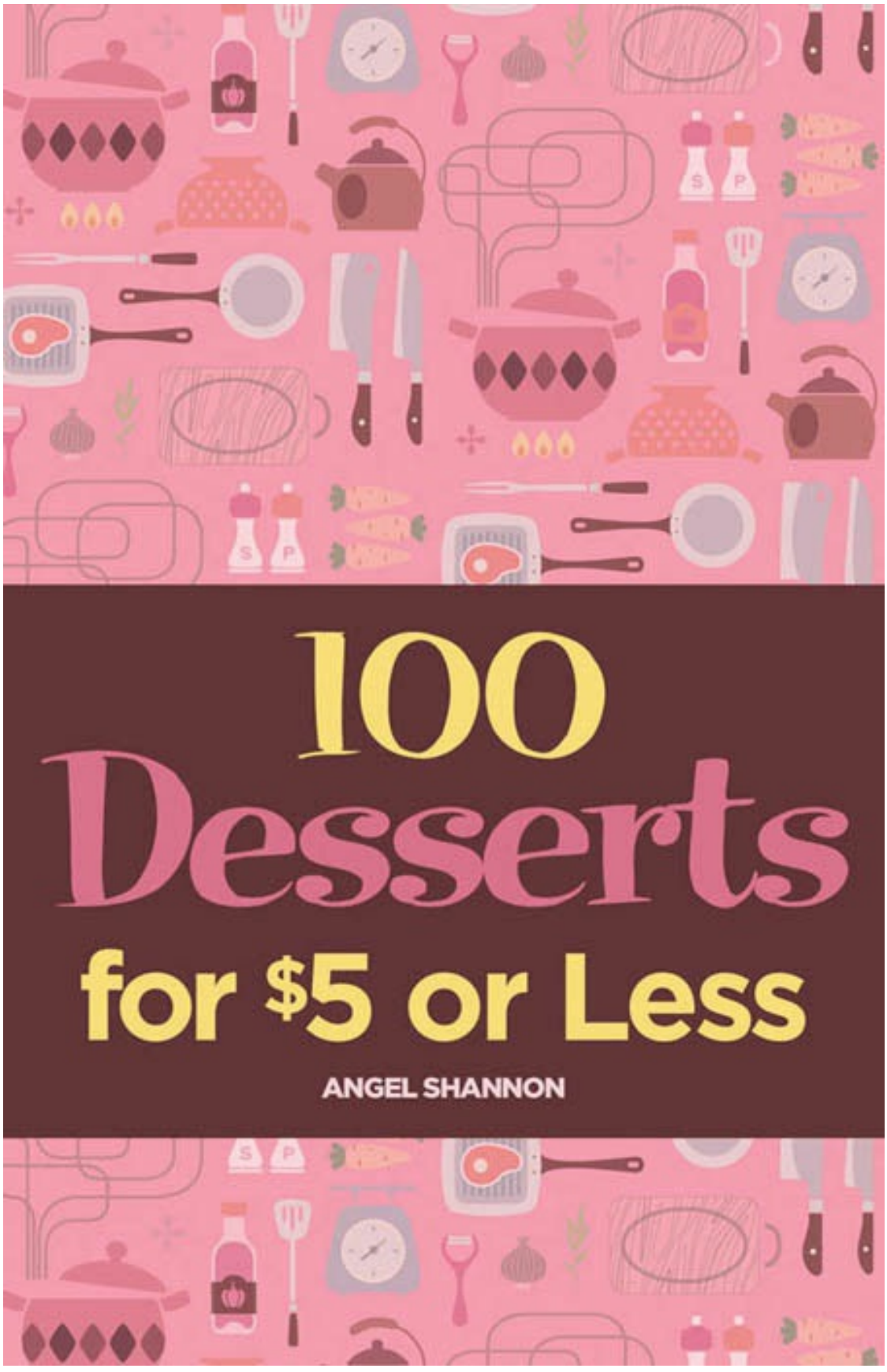
100
Desserts
for $5 or Less
ANGEL SHANNON

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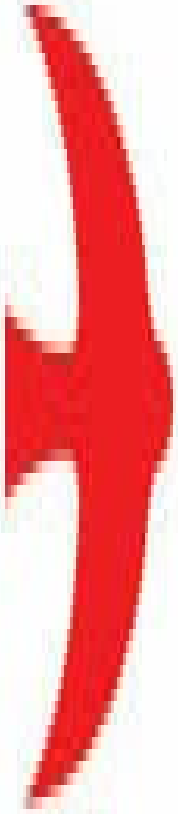

GIBBS SMITH

TO ENRICH AND INSPIRE HUMANKIND

100 Desserts for $5 or Less

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To the sweetest guy in my life, my husband Bill—without your input I would not have been able to test and taste all of these delicious desserts!

100 Desserts for $5 or Less

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Introduction

Now is the time to examine your food budget and develop savvy shopping and cooking skills that will benefit you and your whole family. This book is full of tips and advice on how to save money on food—one of the few areas of spending you can actually control. Besides providing you with budget-saving techniques, this book also offers 100 imaginative recipes made from low-cost ingredients that will please anyone who tries them. Let the saving begin!

Have a Plan Before You Shop

The key to staying within your food budget is to have a plan. In the case of grocery shopping, your plan should include a grocery list. Once you have a list, stick to it! Check out the following suggestions for creating the perfect grocery-shopping list.

1. Do you know what's on sale? Local grocery stores typically send out fliers in the mail or newspaper each week. Take advantage of these fliers and use them to help make your weekly grocery list. Start your list by writing down the store, sale item, and price. After you've put your list together (including ingredients from the recipes you will be making), review it. Is there something you can eliminate? After a few weeks of smart shopping and thrifty cooking, you'll start to see places on your grocery list where you can really cut back.

NOTE: Smart spenders know that the key to the greatest savings depends on purchasing the best sale items. Combined with coupons, the grocery items on sale can be purchased at greatly reduced prices.

2. Look ahead a week or two when making out your shopping list. This means planning out the recipes you intend to make ahead of time as well. In your planning, consider what you already have in your pantry, refrigerator, or freezer that could be used in combination with, or as a substitute for, ingredients in upcoming recipes you want to make. This method will prevent you from buying unnecessary groceries and will also help to use up any leftovers that might be looming in your kitchen.

3. Many ingredients are common in multiple recipes, so consider looking for recipes to make each week that share some of the same ingredients but are different enough to provide delicious variety for your family. Also, think about recipes that would be easy to double and freeze for later use.

4. Where is the best place to shop? Most people go to the supermarket or store that is the closest or most convenient for them. Since you've already made a grocery list of stores and sale items, try to stick to the list and shop at those places instead. However, keep in mind that it isn't worth spending a dollar in gas to save twenty-five cents on a single food item.

NOTE: Some grocery stores offer price matching for sale items. Just ask the customer service desk if they offer the service and what you will need to do to benefit from it.

5. Clipping coupons really does cut costs. In short, some people are meant to be coupon clippers and some are not. While some find it frustrating and time- consuming to clip coupons for everything, there are those who do it and love it. Just remember to clip coupons for things you normally buy; just because you have a coupon for something doesn't mean you have to buy it. If it's something out of the ordinary, getting it at a reduced price still means you're spending outside of your budget to get it.

NOTE: Many stores have double-coupon days. This means the store matches the discount on the coupon and you save double the amount!

General Grocery Shopping Tips

Even if you are armed with the best-ever shopping list, it's tough to get in and out of the store as planned without a whole lot of will power. Things such as store layout, time of day, your state of mind, and really powerful marketing techniques are at work to get you to spend more money. For those who are new to food budgeting, this might all seem a bit overwhelming. However, with a few weeks of practice, you'll find that you're planning meals and shopping like a pro. The following tips on shopping in general may help guide you in your quest to save money.

• Try to choose a time when you can go to the store with the fewest distractions, whether that means leaving kids at home or avoiding crowds of other shoppers. Try going early in the morning or late at night. Generally, avoid the after-work rush and anytime after 11:00 a.m. on weekends.

• Go to the grocery store as infrequently as you can. Try going once a week to coincide with the weekly fliers. The easiest way to blow your food budget is to go the store multiple times each week for a few items, because most likely you'll leave the store with more than you intended. If you can make do with what you have at home, you will save money every month.

• Don't shop when you're hungry or thirsty. If this can't be avoided, try drinking water before you go shopping to take the edge off your appetite.

• When walking down the aisles, look low and high for the less expensive brands. Most stores place the brand-name products on eye-level shelves because shoppers tend to grab whatever is in front of them instead of looking for the best bargains.

• Stay focused on the price of the item, not the packaging it comes in. Since bright colors and fancy packaging are attractive, shoppers tend to pick up these items first. House brands are generally less colorful but typically less expensive.

• Remember to stick to your list to avoid impulse buying. When you pick up something that isn't on your list, ask yourself why you want it. Do you really need it or do you just want it? Too many impulse purchases can ruin your carefully planned food budget.

• It is a huge advantage to know which fruits and vegetables are in season, as they will be part of some great sales. Not only are in-season produce items less expensive, they're fresher. It's also wise to learn

which vegetables and fruits are less expensive when fresh, and which ones are less expensive when frozen or canned.

NOTE: Beware of the conveniently packaged produce designed to save you time in preparation. Most of these convenience items cost twice as much.

• Remember to check the weekly fliers for sales on your family's favorite snack foods. Everyone loves snacks, and it's easy to spend a lot on salty and sugary items if they aren't on sale.

• The frozen food section is the home of some of the best grocery bargains, as well as some of the worst. Remember, convenience often comes with a price. On the flip side, there are some frozen foods that cost much less than fresh or canned, and they are often healthier because the vitamin content is preserved when they are flash frozen.

20 Budget-Saving Tips

The following list includes the best budget-saving tips in a nutshell.

1. Use coupons. Though this doesn't really need explanation, clipping coupons is an excellent way to save. See if the grocer in your area has a double- or triple-coupon day for even greater savings.

2. Know your family's likes and dislikes. Stock up on favorites when they are on sale and skip sales of items your family doesn't like.

3. Look for recipes that require a few inexpensive ingredients and avoid those that require you to buy something you'll rarely use again, such as an exotic spice.

4. Experiment with recipes. If you're making a dessert that calls for a spice you don't have, try to find a substitute spice in your pantry.

5. Substitute less-expensive ingredients for expensive ones. Determine if the recipe absolutely must have that item to make it work. If not, leave it out altogether or use a cheaper alternative. For example, using margarine instead of butter works in many recipes.

6. Use less of an expensive ingredient if you can't find a substitute for it. For example, try cutting the amount by a third. Keep cutting each time you make the recipe to see how it tastes. Once the adjustment is noticeable, you know you've cut too much.

7. Buy store brands. These brands are generally less expensive and usually just as good as name brands—sometimes even better.

8. Think of ways to use everything you already have. Maybe you will create an amazing new dessert!

9. Substitute canned fruit for fresh if a recipe calls for a fruit that is not in season or when it won't sacrifice taste.

10. Save or bookmark recipes that your family really likes so you know what ingredients to stock in your pantry.

11. Try to make desserts that will have leftovers so you can enjoy it several nights of the week.

12. Have a tried-and-true "standby" dessert for which the ingredients are always in your pantry, such as a favorite cake or yummy cookies.

13. Buy in bulk. Though the upfront cost is more, you'll be able to get more uses out of bulk item purchases, making the actual costs per serving much less.

14. Freezing is a great way to preserve the quality of foods until you can use them, especially if you're buying in bulk. Store items such as fruits or vegetables in 1-cup portions so they are easy to grab.

15. Invest in basic food storage items. Simple plastic containers with lids, freezer bags, and aluminum foil can keep food fresh and protected until you need it again.

16. Cut down on or eliminate junk food. Find healthier and less-

expensive alternatives instead.

17. Don’t order dessert at restaurants. You can make a great treat at home for much less! Even better, don’t do to the restaurant for dinner and try something from 100 Meals for $5 or Less by Jennifer Maughan.

18. Don’t sacrifice taste on low-cost items. The key is making delicious and nutritious soups that satisfy.

19. Think healthy and implement low-cost yet nutritious foods into your diet.

20. Control portions. We tend to eat portions that far exceed what we actually need. Once you get used to smaller portions, you’ll find that you are satisfied on less. Consult nutrition guides for recommended portions and serving sizes.

The Well-Stocked Budget Pantry and Refrigerator

When planning for recipes, there are a number of items that a well-stocked budget pantry and refrigerator should include. The following list is by no means inclusive, but it does list grocery items that are traditionally considered staples and that are inexpensive, store well, and are versatile enough to appear in many different dishes without becoming boring. Keep track of what ingredients you use most often, and if you see one of the must-have items on sale, stock up!

Try to keep these items in your pantry or refrigerator:

- **Biscuit baking mixes**
- **Breads**
- **Canned cream soups**
- **Canned vegetables**
- **Cereals**
- **Cheeses**
- **Chips and crackers**
- **Condiments**
- **Cornmeal**

- **Cream, condensed milk, and evaporated milk**
- **Dry beans and canned beans**
- **Eggs**
- **Flour**
- **Frozen fruit and canned fruit**
- **Frozen mixed vegetables**
- **Lemon juice**
- **Margarine, butter, shortening, and cooking oils**
- **Meats**
- **Milk**

- **Pasta**
- **Peanut butter**
- **Potatoes**
- **Rice**
- **Salt, pepper, and spices**
- **Sugar (white, brown, and powdered)**

Author’s Notes

A dessert lover’s pantry should include:

• All-purpose flour

• Granulated sugar

• Baking soda

• Baking powder

• Salt

• Spices and extracts

• Oil (for baking, frying, or greasing pans)

NOTE: Small amounts of these items, such as 1/2 cup or less, were not

included in recipe cost calculations.

A few handy hints:

• Buy store brands

• Shop farmers markets and support local growers

• Buy in bulk

• Take advantage of sales— buy multiples

• Use coupons

• For best results use extracts instead of flavorings

• Always have an accurate kitchen scale

How to make your own:

Sweetened condensed milk

Place 1 cup instant nonfat dry milk into a blender along with 2/3 cup sugar, 1/2 cup boiling water, and 3 tablespoons melted unsalted butter. Process until smooth and creamy, and you'll have enough to equal a 14-ounce can.

Cake flour

Use 3/4 cup bleached all-purpose flour sifted with 2 tablespoons cornstarch to make 1 cup cake flour.

Brown sugar

Add 2 tablespoons molasses to 1 cup granulated sugar and combine; adjust from there. The choice of using dark or light molasses is yours.

Buttermilk

Measure just a little less than 1 cup whole milk; add 1 tablespoon lemon juice or vinegar and stir. Let sit for 5–10 minutes.

Dark corn syrup

Combine 3/4 cup light corn syrup with 1/4 cup light molasses.

Try something new:

Form a dessert exchange with your friends and neighbors. Participants make a different dessert and trade off as often as you'd like—once a week or once a month. It's a great opportunity to see those you care about and adopt some new family favorite recipes.

Cakes

Apple Pake

Is it a pie or a cake? You be the judge . . . it might take a second helping to decide!

1 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter, softened
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 tablespoons hot water
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup flour
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
2-1/2 cups diced apples

Preheat oven to 350º.

Cream the sugar and butter in a bowl. Dissolve the baking soda in hot water and mix into butter mixture along with the egg and vanilla. Mix in cinnamon, cloves, salt, and flour, then fold in walnuts and apples. Pour into a lightly greased, 9-inch deep-dish pie pan. Bake for 45 minutes.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 335

Fat per serving 17g

Banana Pie Cake

Delicious any time of day—even breakfast—when warmed and spread with butter.

1-3/4 cups sugar
2 cups flour, sifted
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup unsweetened applesauce
4 egg whites
1/2 cup chopped nuts
1 cup mashed ripe banana
1 tablespoon cocoa powder

Preheat oven to 350º.

Mix together the sugar, flour, cinnamon, salt, and baking soda; set aside.

In a separate bowl, blend together the applesauce, egg whites, and nuts; mix into dry ingredients. Add mashed banana and cocoa powder. Bake in a lightly greased Bundt pan for 45–50 minutes.

Serves 10

Calories per serving 297

Fat per serving 4g

Coconut Lover’s Cream Cake

A creamy smooth cake worth the wait.

1 cup shredded coconut
1 cup milk
3/4 cup butter
2 cups sugar
3 eggs
1 teaspoon almond extract
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
2-1/2 cups flour

Preheat oven to 350º.

Place coconut and milk in a small bowl and let soak for 10 minutes. Cream butter until very light and fluffy; add sugar a little at a time, creaming well after each addition. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add almond extract.

Sift together the salt, baking powder, and flour; add alternately with prepared coconut and milk. Pour batter in a lightly greased 9 x 13-inch pan. Bake for 40–45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Serves 15

Calories per serving 332

Fat per serving 14g

Creamy Lemon Cheesecake

Try topping this luscious cheesecake with some berries and a sprinkle of powdered sugar for even more great taste.

1 box pudding recipe lemon cake mix
3 eggs, divided
1/3 cup oil
2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
1 cup sour cream
1/2 cup sugar

Preheat oven to 350º.

Measure 1 cup dry cake mix and set aside. Combine remaining cake mix with 1 egg and oil. Press mixture into the bottom of a greased 9 x 13-inch pan. Bake for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, combine the reserved cake mix with all the remaining ingredients; beat at low speed for a few minutes. Spread over crust. Bake for about 35 minutes; cool.

Serves 15

Calories per serving 359

Fat per serving 22g

Dark Chocolate Upside Down Cake

Gooey fun for the whole family!

1/2 cup butter
1/4 cup water
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup chopped nuts
1-1/3 cups flaked coconut
1 box dark chocolate cake mix

Preheat oven to 350º.

Melt butter in a 9 x 13-inch pan. Add water and then sprinkle brown sugar evenly over top. Arrange nuts and coconut over sugar mixture. Prepare cake mix according to package directions; pour batter over mixture in pan. Bake for 40 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let stand for 5 minutes, then invert onto a large platter or cookie sheet.

Serves 15

Calories per serving 342

Fat per serving 18g

Freezer Fudge Cake

As fun to make as it is to eat! It'll serve four . . . at least twice!

1 box yellow cake mix
1 cup water
1/3 cup oil
3 eggs
1/2 cup chopped nuts
1-3/4 cups boiling water
1/4 cup cocoa
1 cup brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350º.

Prepare cake mix according to package directions using the water, oil, and eggs; fold in nuts. Pour batter into a 9 x 13-inch baking pan. Cover tightly with foil and freeze. Combine boiling water, cocoa, and brown sugar; pour over frozen cake. Bake for 1 hour and cool before serving.

Serves 15

Calories per serving 293

Fat per serving 12g

Ginger Clove Cake

Perfect for an afternoon snack or served warm with a drizzle of caramel sauce.

1 cup flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 heaping teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup water
1/2 tablespoon butter
1 egg yolk

Preheat oven to 325º.

Sift together the flour, baking soda, salt, ginger, and cloves into a medium bowl; mix in the honey. Heat water to boiling in the microwave; add butter. When butter has melted, add to dry ingredients and beat well. Add yolk and beat again. Pour into an 8 x 8-inch baking dish and bake for 35 minutes. Serve warm.

Serves 6

Calories per serving 182

Fat per serving 2g

Glass of Milk Cake

Actually, this cake has no milk . . . but it goes great with a tall ice-cold glass of “moo” juice!

1 cup butter
2 cups sugar
2 cups flour, divided
6 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
Sunshine Orange Sauce, optional

Preheat oven to 350º.

Cream the butter and sugar with 2 tablespoons flour; add eggs, one at a time. Add remaining flour and vanilla. Bake in a greased 9 x 5-inch loaf pan for 1 hour. Drizzle with Sunshine Orange Sauce, if desired.

Serves 10

Calories per serving 452

Fat per serving 21g

Maple Nut Cake

This moist cake is an absolute pleasure to serve to friends and family.

1/2 cup butter
1-1/2 cups brown sugar
3 eggs, separated
2-1/4 cups sifted flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup milk
1 teaspoon maple flavoring
1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts
Sour Cream Frosting, optional

Preheat oven to 350º.

Cream the butter and add brown sugar gradually; beat the egg yolks and add to cream mixture. Sift flour two more times with baking powder and salt. Beat dry ingredients into creamed mixture alternately with milk. Add maple flavoring and nuts. Whip egg whites until stiff and fold into batter. Bake in two 8-inch round pans for 30 minutes. Once cool, frost the two-layer cake with Sour Cream Frosting, if desired.

Serves 10

Calories per serving 371

Fat per serving 15g

Nectar of the Gods Cake

Nothing simpler than starting with a yellow cake mix to make something spectacular!

Cake

1 box deluxe yellow cake mix
4 whole eggs
3/4 cup oil
3 teaspoons lemon flavoring
3/4 cup apricot nectar

Glaze

1-1/2 cups sifted powdered sugar
3 lemons, juiced

Preheat oven to 300º.

Pour all cake ingredients into a bowl and beat with an electric mixer for 4 minutes. Bake in a greased tube pan for 1 hour.

To make the glaze, mix the powdered sugar and lemon juice thoroughly. Pour over hot cake in pan and let cool completely in pan before removing.

Serves 10

Calories per serving 484

Fat per serving 24g

Retro Orange Kiss-Me Cake

My grandma made this all the time, and I’m sure it’s a cake you won’t soon forget.

1 large orange, unpeeled
1 cup raisins
1/2 cup walnuts
2 cups cake flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter-flavored shortening
3/4 cup milk

Topping

1/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350º.

Cut orange into quarters and remove seeds; squeeze 1/3 cup orange juice from fruit and set aside. Place quartered orange, raisins, and walnuts together in a food processor and grind together.

In a bowl, sift together the cake flour, baking soda, salt, and sugar. Cut in shortening and add milk; beat for 2–3 minutes. Fold orange mixture into batter. Pour into a greased and floured 9 x 13-inch pan. Bake for 40–50 minutes. Leave cake in pan and drizzle reserved orange juice over top while warm.

Combine all of the topping ingredients and sprinkle over top of warm cake.

Serves 15

Calories per serving 338

Fat per serving 11g

Quick as Lightning Cake

Need a quick dessert for last-minute guests? This will do nicely.

1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 cup butter, melted
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup finely chopped pecans, plus more if desired

Preheat oven to 400º.

Beat together the sugar and eggs. Sift together the flour and baking powder and add to the egg mixture.

In a small bowl, combine the butter, vanilla, and pecans. Mix into cake batter and pour into a greased 9 x 9-inch pan. Sprinkle additional pecans on top, if desired. Bake for 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Serves 9

Calories per serving 329

Fat per serving 20g

Scrumptious Carrot Cake

This classic carrot cake recipe is rich and retro, and definitely one that can’t be beat.

2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 cup canola oil
2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup crushed pineapple
2 large carrots, peeled and grated
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
Cream Cheese Frosting, optional

Preheat oven to 350º.

Mix everything together except the frosting and pour into an ungreased 9 x 13-inch pan. Bake for 40–45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean; cool. Top with Cream Cheese Frosting, if desired.

Serves 15

Calories per serving 340

Fat per serving 17g

Sour Cream Coffee Cake

This recipe is an old-fashioned stand-by for all ages.

Cake

1/2 cup butter, softened
1 cup sugar
2 eggs, beaten
2 cups flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup sour cream
1 teaspoon vanilla

Topping

1/3 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350º.

Combine all the cake ingredients; set aside.

In a bowl, combine all the topping ingredients.

Pour half of the batter into a greased 9 x 9-inch pan and then sprinkle half of the topping over batter. Pour remaining batter over top and cover with remaining topping. Swirl with a knife. Bake about 35 minutes.

Serves 9

Calories per serving 430

Fat per serving 18g

Candy

Chocolate Rummies

Use butterscotch chips instead of chocolate and get an entirely different flavor that’s equally delicious.

8 ounces semisweet chocolate chips
3-1/2 ounces marshmallow crème
1/2 tablespoon rum extract
1-1/2 cups crisp rice cereal
1/2 cup shredded coconut, divided
1/2 cup finely chopped pecans

Melt the chocolate in the top of a double boiler; let stand until cool but not set. Combine marshmallow crème and rum extract with melted chocolate; stir well. Add cereal, 1/4 cup coconut, and pecans, mixing gently. Shape into 1-inch balls. Pulverize remaining coconut in a food processor and then roll each ball in coconut and chill until firm.

Makes 2 dozen

Calories per serving 298 (about 3 pieces)

Fat per serving 17g

Crunch-a-licious Almond Candy

Bet you can’t eat just one!

3 tablespoons butter
1-1/2 cups whole almonds
2/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.

In heavy saucepan, melt butter over medium-high heat. Add almonds and sugar. Cook, stirring constantly, for 7–8 minutes, or until syrup is golden brown. Remove from heat; stir in vanilla.

Drop by clusters onto parchment paper and cool. Store in an airtight container.

Makes 15 candies

Calories per serving 364 (about 3 pieces)

Fat per serving 24g

Delicious Date Bar

Dates are nature’s candy. This candy can be eaten as is or chopped and added to a vanilla milkshake!

1 egg
1/2 cup sugar
4 ounces pitted dates, chopped
1/2 cup shredded coconut
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 teaspoon almond extract
Granulated sugar

Preheat oven to 350º.

Beat the egg until lemon yellow in color; add sugar and continue to beat well. Mix in dates, coconut, and extracts. Turn into a 1-quart dish and bake for 25 minutes. Remove from oven and stir mixture; cool slightly. Lay a piece of plastic wrap on the counter and mound warm mixture into the middle. Fold bottom third of wrap over the top and form this mixture into a log approximately 7–8 inches long and about 1-1/2 inches in diameter. Place in fridge to cool. Unwrap, cut into slices, and roll in sugar.

Makes 12–15 pieces

Calories per serving 269 (about 3 pieces)

Fat per serving 9g

Divine Divinity Candy

Easter, Christmas, Mother's Day . . . any holiday welcomes this sweet treat.

1-1/2 cups sugar
1/2 cup light corn syrup
1/2 cup water
1 egg white, beaten stiff
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup nuts

Cook the sugar, corn syrup, and water in a saucepan until it threads off of a wooden spoon. Beat in stiff egg white and vanilla very slowly; beat for 5 minutes. Set mixture aside to cool for 10 minutes. Beat again until right consistency to form into patties. Stir in nuts and begin to spoon onto a piece of waxed paper that has been buttered. Use two spoons to do this—one to scoop up the candy and the other to push it off of the original spoon onto the waxed paper.

Makes about 25–30 pieces

Calories per serving 206 (about 3 pieces)

Fat per serving 4g

Frannie’s Unbaked Oatmeal Candy Cookies

Every year my niece sends me a Christmas tin of these yummy cookies. It’s one of my holiday highlights!

3 tablespoons cocoa
1/2 cup milk
2 cups sugar
1/2 cup butter
3 cups quick oatmeal
1/2 cup peanut butter, chunky or smooth
1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine the cocoa, milk, sugar, and butter in a pan; boil for 1 minute. Remove from heat and then beat in remaining ingredients. Drop by teaspoons onto waxed paper or aluminum foil to cool.

Makes about 50 cookies

Calories per serving 262 (about 3 cookies)

Fat per serving 11g

Holiday Peppermint Fudge

I love this fudge . . . its unexpected richness teamed with crunchy crushed candies is scrumptious with a cup of hot cocoa.

1-1/4 cups sugar
1/4 cup butter
2-1/2 ounces evaporated milk
3-1/2 ounces marshmallow crème
4 ounces almond bark
1/4 cup finely crushed peppermint candy
Red food coloring
More crushed peppermint candy or mini chocolate chips, optional

Line a 9 x 9-inch pan with plastic wrap, extending it over the sides. Lightly spray with nonstick spray.

In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, butter, and milk; bring to a boil, stirring constantly, for 5 minutes over medium heat. Remove from heat and add marshmallow crème and almond bark, stirring until smooth. Stir in crushed candy and food coloring. Pour into prepared pan; sprinkle with more crushed candies, if desired. Refrigerate until firm.

Makes about 1-1/4 pounds

Calories per serving 175 (3 pieces, about 1-1/2 inches each)

Fat per serving 6g

Variation: Try replacing peppermint with spearmint candies and use green food coloring!

Homemade Melt-In-Your-Mouth Marshmallows

Light, soft, and creamy, these marshmallows make the best s’mores in the world!

1 cup cold water
2 cups sugar
3 (3/4-ounce) envelopes unflavored gelatin
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
Powdered sugar

Prepare an 8 x 8-inch pan lined with parchment paper extended over the edges and lightly greased.

Pour cold water into a large saucepan; stir in sugar, gelatin, and salt. Over medium-high heat, whisk mixture continuously and bring to a full boil for 1 minute, stirring while boiling. (Be careful—this mixture will rise up in the pan, so make sure to use the large size!) Remove from heat and cool for 5 minutes; add vanilla. Beat with an electric mixer at high speed until marshmallow sauce forms stiff peaks. Pour into prepared pan and smooth out top. Place in refrigerator for about 5 minutes.

Remove from refrigerator and lift out using parchment paper; place on a flat surface. Pour powdered sugar into a gallon-size ziplock bag. Using a wet knife, slice marshmallow into squares and then drop in the bag with powdered sugar; shake to coat. Store in an airtight container.

Makes around 50 marshmallows

Calories per serving 149 (about 4 pieces)

Fat per serving <1g

Honey–Peanut Butter Candy

Instead of coconut, try rolling these in sesame seeds, wheat germ, or crushed peanuts.

1 cup crunchy peanut butter
1 cup dry milk powder
1/2 cup clover honey
1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla
Finely shredded coconut

Combine the first four ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Using your hands, roll a teaspoonful into a ball and then roll in coconut. Repeat until all of the mixture is used. Place in a container and keep in the freezer for 20 minutes before serving. Store covered in freezer.

Makes 25 pieces

Calories per serving 311 (about 3 pieces)

Fat per serving 16g

Magic Microwave Peanut Brittle

Who knew this classic candy could be so easy to make?

1 cup sugar
1/2 cup light corn syrup
Dash of salt
1-1/2 cups shelled raw peanuts
1 tablespoon butter
1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon vanilla

In a 3-quart casserole, combine the sugar, corn syrup, and salt; stir in peanuts. Microwave on high for about 8–10 minutes, or until light brown, stirring once or twice. Stir in remaining ingredients until light and foamy. Spread mixture as thinly as possible onto a heavily greased baking sheet. Cool and break into pieces.

Makes about 50 pieces

Calories per serving 271 (about 4 pieces)

Fat per serving 15g

Minted Walnut Candy

Munch ’em or give ’em as a gift to somebody you love. This is a fabulous holiday recipe!

1 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup water
1 tablespoon light corn syrup
6 large marshmallows
A few drops peppermint extract (or 1 teaspoon vanilla, if preferred)
2 cups walnut halves (enough so that they are well covered with candy coa

Boil the sugar, salt, water, and syrup to 236º on a candy thermometer. Remove from heat; add marshmallows and stir until melted. Stir in extract, then gently stir in walnut halves until well coated. Turn onto waxed paper; separate nuts using a fork. Let cool and cut into pieces.

Makes about 40 pieces

Calories per serving 193 (about 3 pieces)

Fat per serving 11g

Open Sesame Candy

Addicting, surprising, and a welcome change from the norm.

1/2 pound light brown sugar
1-1/2 teaspoons butter
1/4 cup milk
1-1/2 teaspoons white vinegar
3/4 cup toasted sesame seeds
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

In a large saucepan, bring the brown sugar, butter, milk, and vinegar to a boil over medium-high heat. When mixture begins to thread, remove from heat and beat in seeds and vanilla until creamy. Drop 1 teaspoon at a time onto a greased pan and let cool.

Note: If mixture is too dry after adding sesame seeds, just add a tablespoon or so of milk and return to low heat for a few minutes, continuing to stir until you get the right consistency to drop by spoonfuls onto the pan.

Makes about 20 candies

Calories per serving 314 (about 4 pieces)

Fat per serving 12g

Penuche Candy

Brown sugar sweetness—southern style!

1 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup milk
2 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Place the brown sugar in a small saucepan; add milk and water. Boil until it makes a soft ball when a bit is dropped into cold water. Remove from heat and cool slightly; add butter. Beat until creamy. Add nuts and vanilla just before pouring into a 8 x 8-inch pan that has been lightly buttered or greased. (Size of dish depends on how thick you'd like the candy.) Cover and refrigerate to cool completely. Cut into small squares to serve.

Makes 64 pieces (1-inch squares)

Calories per serving 117 (about 4 pieces)

Fat per serving 6g

Two Thumbs Up Caramel Corn

Make movie night extra special with this unexpected treat.

1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup light corn syrup
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup Spanish peanuts, optional
7 cups popped plain popcorn

In a saucepan, stir together the butter, syrup, brown sugar, and salt. Boil for 2-1/2 minutes without stirring; stir and boil for 3 minutes. Remove from heat. Add peanuts, if desired. Pour mixture over popcorn in a large brown paper bag and shake. Microwave for 3-1/2 minutes, shaking every 20–30 seconds. Pour out of bag onto a large jelly roll pan to cool.

Serves 6

Calories per serving 210

Fat per serving 7g

Cookies & Bars

Apple Raisin Bars

Remember the “After School Special” on television? That’s what I’d call these!

1-1/4 cups packed light brown sugar
6 tablespoons butter
2 eggs
1-1/2 cups chunky applesauce
2 teaspoons vanilla
2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1-1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
1-1/2 cups quick oats
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
Powdered sugar, optional

Preheat oven to 350º.

Prepare a 9 x 13-inch pan with nonstick spray.

With an electric mixer, beat together the brown sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Add eggs, applesauce, and vanilla and beat until well mixed.

In a separate bowl, mix together the flour, baking soda, pumpkin pie spice, and oats. Stir in raisins and walnuts. Add oat mixture to applesauce mixture and stir well. Spread into prepared pan and bake about 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in pan on wire rack. Sprinkle with powdered sugar, if desired.

Serves 15

Calories per serving 268

Fat per serving 8g

Barbara’s Best Banana Bars

My friend Barb was kind enough to bring me a whole platter of these one day and I went crazy!

1-1/2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 cup sour cream
1/2 cup butter, softened
1-1/2 cups mashed bananas (about 3 large)
2 teaspoons vanilla
2 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
Browned Butter Frosting, optional

Preheat oven to 375º.

Grease and flour an 18 x 13-inch jelly roll pan; set aside.

Mix together the sugar, eggs, sour cream, and butter in a large mixing bowl. Blend on low speed for 1 minute. Beat in bananas and vanilla for 30 seconds. Beat in flour, salt, and baking soda on medium speed for 1 minute. Pour into prepared pan and bake until golden brown, about 20–25 minutes. Cool and eat as is, or frost with Browned Butter Frosting, if desired.

Serves about 20

Calories per serving 186

Fat per serving 6g

Butterscotch Apple Squares

This is the most delightful recipe for a fall day, especially if served with warm apple cider!

1/4 cup butter
3/4 cup graham cracker crumbs
3/4 cup peeled and chopped apples
3 ounces butterscotch morsels
7 ounces sweetened condensed milk
2/3 cup flaked coconut
1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 325º.

Melt the butter in an 8 x 8-inch baking pan. Sprinkle cracker crumbs evenly over butter. Spread apples evenly over crumbs. Melt butterscotch morsels with condensed milk in the top of a double boiler; pour evenly over apples. Top with coconut and nuts and press down gently. Bake for 25–30 minutes, or until lightly browned. Cool thoroughly and chill. Cut into bars to serve.

Serves 9

Calories per serving 304

Fat per serving 16g

Cherry Nut Bars

Hungry boys and girls—and husbands—love these simple cookie bars.

1-1/4 cups sifted cake flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon baking powder
2 eggs
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup chopped maraschino cherries
1/2 cup chopped pecans
3 tablespoons powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350º.

Sift together the flour, salt, and baking powder; set aside.

In a separate bowl, beat the eggs and then gradually beat in the sugar. Add the cherries and pecans. Add the flour mixture and stir until well mixed. Spread into a greased 8 x 8-inch pan and bake for 30 minutes. Cool and cut into bars. Sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Makes 8 large bars

Calories per serving 349

Fat per serving 11g

Dainty Lace Cookies

These flourless cookies are always my husband’s favorite.

1 egg
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon melted butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup rolled oats, uncooked
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1/2 cup finely shredded coconut
1/2 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 375º.

Cream together the egg, sugar, butter, and vanilla; mix in remaining ingredients. Drop by teaspoonfuls on a well-greased baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and cool on baking sheet for about 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

Makes around 60 cookies

Calories per serving 134 (about 4 cookies)

Fat per serving 8g

Easy Brown Sugar Refrigerator Cookies

The perfect crispy cookie to serve with your favorite ice cream.

1-3/4 cups flour
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup butter, softened
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 375º.

Mix together the flour, brown sugar, baking soda, cream of tartar, and salt in a large bowl.

In a separate bowl, blend the butter, egg, and vanilla. Blend flour mixture into butter mixture a little at a time; stir in the pecans. Shape the dough into a log or roll and wrap in wax or parchment paper; chill. Cut into 1/8-inch-thick slices and place on an ungreased cookie sheet about 1/2 inch apart. Bake for 8–10 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Makes 3-1/2 dozen

Calories per serving 238 (about 3 cookies)

Fat per serving 12g

Flourless Peanut Butter Cookies

These light cookies are richly flavored and have a cute crinkle top. Just watch them disappear!

1 cup creamy peanut butter
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350º.

Mix together all of the ingredients in a bowl. Roll dough into 1-1/2-inch balls and place 1 inch apart on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake for 15–20 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Makes about 20 cookies

Calories per serving 340 (about 3 cookies)

Fat per serving 19g

Ginger Gems

Somebody get some milk because it’s time for a cookie feast! If you’re looking for a spicy-crisp cookie, you’ll be glad you found this super easy recipe.

2 cups flour
1 teaspoon ginger
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup sugar, plus more for rolling
3/4 cup butter-flavored zero trans-fat shortening, room temperature
1 egg
1/4 cup dark molasses

Preheat oven to 350º.

Sift together the flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, and salt; whisk in 1 cup sugar.

In a mixing bowl, beat together the shortening, egg, and molasses. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients a little at a time until well mixed. Roll into 1-inch balls and then roll in additional sugar. Flatten out on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake for 12–15 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Makes 3-1/2 dozen cookies

Calories per serving 241 (about 3 cookies)

Fat per serving 11g

Hobo Muffins

We used to make these in coffee cans, and some people still do. You can also use dates in place of the raisins if you'd prefer.

1-1/2 cups raisins
1 cup water
1/2 cup oil
2 eggs
1 cup sugar
1-2/3 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350º.

Boil the raisins in the water until plump; drain. Mix together the oil, eggs, sugar, and plumped raisins.

In a separate bowl, mix together the flour, baking soda, and salt. Combine the two mixtures and then pour the batter into greased and floured muffin cups to just below the rim. Bake for about 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Makes 10 muffins

Calories per serving 327

Fat per serving 12g

Lemon Walnut Bites

Not too sweet and oh so light. These little bites would be perfect for afternoon tea or as an after-dinner treat.

1 stick butter, softened
1/4 cup sugar
1 egg, separated
2 teaspoons grated orange rind
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup flour
1/2 cup finely chopped walnuts
Powdered sugar, optional

Preheat oven to 350º.

Cream together the butter and sugar; beat in the egg yolk, orange rind, lemon juice, and vanilla. Gradually stir in the flour. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and chill. Using 1/2 teaspoon dough for each, shape into small balls. Dip each ball in the slightly beaten egg white and roll in nuts. Place 1 inch apart on a greased baking sheet. Bake until lightly browned, just over 17 minutes. Sprinkle with powdered sugar for more sweetness, if desired. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Makes about 60 cookie bites

Calories per serving 129 (about 4 cookies)

Fat per serving 9g

Mint Cookies

Try these out for a delicate change of pace when your girlfriends come to the door.

2 sticks unsalted butter
1 cup crushed buttermints
2 cups sifted flour
1 tablespoon sugar

Preheat oven to 325º.

Cream the butter until fluffy; stir in mints until well mixed. Add flour, shape into a log, roll in waxed paper, and chill for at least 1 hour. Cut 1/4-inch-thick slices from log, place on an ungreased baking sheet and sprinkle with sugar. Bake for 15 minutes, or until barely browned. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Makes 3 dozen

Calories per serving 219 (about 3 cookies)

Fat per serving 15g

Mom’s Baby Ruth Cookies

This is one of my mom’s favorite cookie recipes. I always got my after-school welcome home hug then a little treat just like these.

1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg
2 ounces (give or take) finely chopped Baby Ruth candy bars
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 375º.

Cream together the butter and sugar until smooth. Beat in the egg and then stir in remaining ingredients and chill. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto a greased baking sheet. Flatten with a fork and bake for 10 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Makes 15 cookies

Calories per serving 194 (about 2 cookies)

Fat per serving 14g

Old-Fashioned Apple Butter Cookies

My mom made her own apple butter every year. Now you can find it with the jams and jellies at most grocery stores.

1-1/2 cups flour
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup apple butter
1/2 cup oil
2 eggs
1/2 cup chopped nuts
1/2 cup raisins, optional

Preheat oven to 350º.

Mix together the flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder. Add all remaining ingredients and mix well. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto a lightly greased baking sheet and bake for 10–12 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Makes 3-1/2 dozen

Calories per serving 234 (about 3 cookies)

Fat per serving 11g

Peppermint Moons

Light and crumbly, the tops of these cookies can be rolled in crushed peppermints just before baking for added flavor. I sometimes tint the dough red and drizzle with powdered sugar icing.

1-1/4 cups butter, softened
3/4 cup sifted powdered sugar
2-1/2 cups flour
3/4 teaspoon peppermint extract

Preheat oven to 375º.

Cream the butter and then gradually beat in the powdered sugar. Add flour, mixing well; stir in peppermint extract. Roll teaspoonfuls of dough into balls. Place on an ungreased baking sheet and bake for 10–12 minutes. Cookies should be lightly browned on the bottom but still appear white on top. Cool on baking sheet.

Makes about 2-1/2 dozen

Calories per serving 352 (about 3 cookies)

Fat per serving 23g

Pineapple Cookies

Everybody that tries these loves them!

1 cup shortening
1-1/2 cups sugar
1 egg
1 can (8 ounces) crushed pineapple, with juice
3-1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
2/3 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350º.

Cream together the shortening and sugar; mix in the egg and pineapple. Mix together all of the dry ingredients except the nuts and stir into the wet mixture. Stir in the nuts and chill dough for 1 hour. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls about 2 inches apart on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake 8–10 minutes, or until no imprint remains when lightly touched. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Makes 60 cookies

Calories per serving 353 (about 4 cookies)

Fat per serving 17g

Super-Easy Shortbread

These little “cookies” are best when used to showcase sweet, juicy fruits like strawberries or peaches.

1 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup sugar
2 cups flour
Sliced fruit, optional
Whipped cream, optional

Preheat oven to 325º.

In a stand mixer, cream the butter and sugar until fluffy. Mix in flour a little at a time until fully incorporated. Form dough into a ball and place on a floured counter. Place sheet of plastic wrap over the top and roll out dough to about 1/4 inch thickness. Cut into 3- to 4-inch squares. Prick top of each shortbread several times with a fork and bake on a baking sheet for 20–25 minutes, or until light golden brown. Serve plain while warm, or in the bottom of a bowl, topped with sliced fruit and a dollop of whipped cream, if desired.

Makes 2-1/2 dozen

Calories per serving 293 (about 3 cookies)

Fat per serving 18g

Sweet-Tart Lime Bars

The perfect finish for a delightful dinner. You can use Key limes if you can find them.

1-1/4 cups flour, divided
1/4 cup powdered sugar
1/4 cup unsalted butter, chilled and cut into small cubes
3 ounces cream cheese, chilled and cut into small cubes
1/8 teaspoon almond extract
2 eggs
1 cup sugar
1/4 cup fresh lime juice
1/2 tablespoon grated lime zest
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350º.

In a food processor, combine 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons flour, powdered sugar, butter, cream cheese, and extract. Pulse until mixture is crumbly and press evenly into the bottom and 1/2 inch up the sides of an 8 x 8-inch baking dish. Bake for 20 minutes, or until lightly browned. Cool 10 minutes.

In a large bowl whisk together the eggs, sugar, lime juice, zest, vanilla, and the remaining flour. Pour over baked crust and return to oven for about 35 minutes, or until center is set. Transfer to a wire rack and cool completely. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Dust top with additional powdered sugar, if desired.

Makes 8 large bars

Calories per serving 289

Fat per serving 10g

Ugly Brownies

Not so pretty, but oh so delicious! Scoop into a bowl and serve warm topped with a scoop of vanilla bean ice cream.

2 eggs
1 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup butter
2-1/2 tablespoons cocoa
1/2 cup flour
Walnuts, optional

Preheat oven to 325º.

Beat the eggs with an electric mixer. Add sugar gradually, continuing to beat well; add vanilla.

In a separate bowl, microwave the butter until melted and then mix in the cocoa. Pour into egg mixture and continue beating with electric mixer. Stir in flour. Pour into a greased 8 x 8-inch pan and sprinkle with walnuts, if using. Bake about 40 minutes.

Makes 8 large bars

Calories per serving 247

Fat per serving 12g

Desserts

Angel Food Charlotte Russe

Just top with whipped cream for a dessert you won’t soon forget.

1 quart milk
2 eggs
1 cup sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 envelope unflavored gelatin
1/2 teaspoon vanilla or other extract
1 (10.5-ounce) store-bought angel food cake, broken into pieces
Whipped cream, optional

Put the milk in a double boiler over low heat.

In a bowl, beat together the eggs, sugar, and cornstarch. Add to hot milk and cook until thick. Add gelatin that has been dissolved in cold water as directed on package. Remove from heat. When cool, flavor with vanilla or other extract. Pour over pieces of angel food cake. Serve with a dollop of whipped cream, if desired.

Serves 6

Calories per serving 404

Fat per serving 7g

Angel Food Skewers

A light and colorful dessert, served with or without whipped cream.

1 (10.5-ounce) store-bought angel food cake
Strawberries
Cantaloupe
Honeydew melon
Peaches
Whipped cream, optional

Cut angel food cake into 2-inch cubes. Scatter on a baking sheet sprayed with nonstick spray and place about 5 inches under oven broiler; turn as necessary to toast all sides.

Cut fruit to the appropriate size depending on your choices—small strawberries won't need any cutting. Slide pieces of toasted cake onto wooden skewers alternately with pieces of fruit.

Serve with whipped cream on the side, if desired.

Serves 6

Calories per serving 186

Fat per serving 1g

Variation: Can be served with fruit warmed. However, if you're going to grill them or leave them under a broiler on the skewer, use metal skewers.

Awesome Apple Fritters

Dip these fritters in maple syrup or serve with ice cream to turn them into an even more spectacular dessert.

1/2 cup flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
Cinnamon to taste
1 egg
1/4 cup milk
1 apple, chopped
Canola or vegetable oil
Powdered sugar

Mix together the flour, baking powder, and cinnamon.

In a separate bowl, beat the egg; stir in milk and apples. Combine both mixtures. Pour about 2 inches of canola or vegetable oil into a skillet and heat to 375º. Drop mixture, 1 generous tablespoon at a time, into heated oil. Fry until golden brown, turning once with tongs. Don’t overcrowd the oil with fritters. Drain on paper towels and serve warm, sprinkled with powdered sugar.

Serves 4–6

Calories per serving 230

Fat per serving 19g

Variation: Use firm sweet peaches in place of apples.

Banana Puff-Pies

These are a huge hit to wrap up any meal. Try sprinkling with peanuts for an added crunch!

4 small bananas
Sugar and cinnamon
1 (9-inch) refrigerated pie crust
Citrus-Nutmeg Sauce or Thick Chocolate-Almond Sauce, optional

Preheat oven to 400º.

Peel the bananas. Roll in sugar and cinnamon and then cover with a thin piece of pie crust. Place seam side down on a baking sheet lightly sprayed with nonstick spray and bake about 10–15 minutes, or until lightly brown; serve with sauce, if desired.

Serves 4

Calories per serving 372

Fat per serving 13g

Blackberry Crunch

This classic dessert is even better served with freshly whipped cream.

1 cup rolled oats, uncooked
1/2 cup flour
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup butter, chilled and cut into small cubes
1 (16-ounce) can blackberry pie filling
Whipped cream, optional

Preheat oven to 350º.

In a large bowl, mix together the oats, flour, and brown sugar. Cut in butter with a pastry cutter or fork until mixture is crumbly. Pour half the mixture into a lightly greased 8 x 8-inch baking dish. Lightly press down on mixture in bottom of dish; spread pie filling over top, then sprinkle remaining oat mixture over filling. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool slightly. Serve warm with whipped cream, if desired.

Serves 6

Calories per serving 505

Fat per serving 16g

Busy Mom Applesauce Crisp

With just a little time on your hands, you can whip this up and have a feel-good dessert that any mom would be proud of!

2 cups applesauce
1/2 cup golden raisins
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1/2 cup chopped walnuts or pecans
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Topping

1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup butter
1 cup biscuit mix
Whipped cream, optional

Preheat oven to 400º.

Combine all of the ingredients except those for the topping and put in a 9-inch pie plate.

Mix together the topping ingredients using two knives or a pastry blender until it resembles cornmeal. Sprinkle topping over the applesauce mixture. Bake for 30 minutes. Serve warm or cold topped with whipped cream, if desired.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 333

Fat per serving 12g

Caramel Apple Funbake

Who needs a stick?

3 cups peeled and sliced apples
1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon biscuit mix
3/4 teaspoon cinnamon
12 caramels, cut into quarters
1/3 cup chopped walnuts or pecans
2 tablespoons brown sugar
2 tablespoons butter, softened

Preheat oven to 375º.

Mix together the apples, 1 tablespoon biscuit mix, and cinnamon; stir in the caramels. Spread mixture into an ungreased 8 x 8-inch pan. Mix nuts, brown sugar, butter, and remaining biscuit mix together until crumbly and then sprinkle over apple mixture. Bake for 35 minutes, or until apples are tender and topping is brown. Serve warm.

Serves 6

Calories per serving 286

Fat per serving 11g

Caramel Dumplings

Dumplings are for more than just chicken! These dessert dumplings are fabulous.

Dumplings

1/2 cup sugar
1 cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
1-1/2 cups sugar, divided
2 tablespoons butter
2 cups boiling water
Whipped cream, optional

Preheat oven to 350º.

Mix together all of the dumpling ingredients; set aside.

Brown 1/2 cup sugar in a heavy, ovenproof skillet; stir in the remaining sugar, butter, and boiling water. While sugar mixture is hot, drop in batter by teaspoonfuls. Bake for 30 minutes. Serve with whipped cream, if desired.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 313

Fat per serving 6g

Chocolate Peppermint Torte

Company coming? They'll rave about this one!

Chocolate Crumb Crust

1 cup chocolate wafer crumbs
2 tablespoons melted butter
1/2 cup butter, softened
3/4 cup sugar
3 ounces unsweetened chocolate, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla
3/4 teaspoon peppermint extract
3 eggs
1/2 cup heavy cream, whipped
Grated unsweetened chocolate

Preheat oven to 350º.

Mix together the crust ingredients and then lightly press into the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan. Bake crust for 7 minutes, or until toasted; cool and set aside.

In a mixing bowl, beat the butter until creamy; gradually add sugar and beat until light and fluffy. Beat in the chocolate, vanilla, and peppermint extract. Add eggs, one at a time, beating for 3 minutes after each addition. Fold in the whipped cream, then spoon into the crust. Sprinkle grated chocolate over top. Cover lightly and chill for at least 4 hours or overnight. Remove rim before serving.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 307

Fat per serving 24g

Cranberry Crunch

I’ve given out this recipe more times than I can count—it’s super fabulous!

1 cup rolled oats, uncooked
1/2 cup flour
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup chopped nuts
1/2 cup butter
1 (16-ounce) can jellied cranberry sauce

Preheat oven to 350º.

Combine the oats, flour, brown sugar, and nuts. Cut in butter until crumbly. Place half of the mixture in the bottom of an 8 x 8-inch greased baking pan. Slide sauce out of can and thinly slice. Cover crust evenly with sauce and top with the remaining oat mixture. Bake for 45 minutes. Cut into squares to serve. Serve warm.

Serves 6

Calories per serving 587

Fat per serving 24g

Custard Macaroons

A sweet little cookie in a soft cloud of cream.

1/3 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons flour
2-1/4 cups milk
1 egg, lightly beaten
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon butter
1/2 pound macaroon cookies

Mix together the sugar, salt, and flour in a double boiler; add the milk gradually and cook, stirring constantly, until thickened. Cover and cook for 10 minutes longer on simmer. Add a little of this mixture to the beaten egg to temper and then add entire egg mixture to the double boiler. Cook for a minute longer, stirring constantly; remove from heat and mix in vanilla and butter. Pour into a serving dish and press macaroons into top of custard; cool and serve.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 235

Fat per serving 6g

Dad’s Favorite Pudding Crunch

French vanilla pudding always tastes great for this recipe, but you could use pistachio, butterscotch, banana cream, lemon . . . the possibilities are endless!

1 cup flour
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup butter, softened
1 cup flaked coconut
1 small box instant pudding, any flavor
1-3/4 cups milk
1/2 pint whipping cream, whipped but not sweetened

Preheat oven to 350º.

In a bowl, mix together the flour, brown sugar, butter, and coconut to a coarse consistency. Turn onto a baking sheet and bake until lightly brown, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes. Remove from oven and cool. Mix pudding mix with the milk according to the pie filling instructions on the box; fold in the whipped cream. Press half of crunch mixture into the bottom of an 8 x 8-inch glass pan, pour pudding over the top and smooth. Sprinkle remaining crunch mixture over the top and refrigerate.

Serves 6

Calories per serving 535

Fat per serving 37g

Doughnut Bread Pudding

This has a retro flavor that can’t be beat. Drizzle with powdered sugar icing for an extra jolt of sweetness.

3 eggs, beaten
3 cups milk
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup raisins
10–12 cups broken day-old glazed or frosted yeast doughnuts (about 10–12

Preheat oven to 350º.

Combine the eggs, milk, sugar, and raisins in a large bowl. Add doughnut pieces and gently combine. Pour into a greased 9 x 13-inch baking pan. Bake for 45 minutes. Serve warm.

Serves 8 or more

Calories per serving 421

Fat per serving 19g

Flaky Pineapple Dessert

Make the dough in the morning and finish this dessert in the evening. It’s a terrific after-dinner surprise for the family—especially when topped with tropical ice cream!

4 cups flour
1 pound butter
1 cup sour cream
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 cups crushed, drained pineapple
1 cup sugar
3 tablespoons cornstarch
Powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 325º.

Blend the flour and butter together in a food processor to a sandy consistency. Mix in the sour cream and vanilla. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

In a saucepan, cook the pineapple, sugar, and cornstarch until thick and clear. Roll out half of the dough and place in a 10 1/2 x 15 1/2 x 1-inch jelly roll pan. Spread cooled filling over the dough and then cover with the remaining dough. Bake until brown, about 30–40 minutes. Sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Serves 12–15

Calories per serving 420

Fat per serving 26g

Grandma’s Sundae Custard

Traditional egg custard gets a makeover! This recipe is full of flavors that remind you of an old-fashioned ice cream parlor.

2 tablespoons finely chopped maraschino cherries, dried off
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 cups milk
1/4 cup sugar
2 eggs plus 1 egg yolk
1/2 teaspoon rum or vanilla extract
Pinch of salt
1 small ripe banana, mashed
2-1/2 tablespoons brown sugar

Preheat oven to 325º.

Combine the cherries and cinnamon; set aside.

In a bowl, combine the milk, sugar, eggs, extract, and salt. Stir in the banana along with the cherry mixture. Pour the custard into individual custard cups. Place kitchen towel in the bottom of a high-sided pan large enough to hold all custard cups. Place cups on towel, slide pan into oven and pour into pan enough boiling water to come halfway up the sides of the custard cups. Bake for 20 minutes; sprinkle brown sugar over top of each cup and bake for 10 minutes more, or until set. Remove cups from water and cool. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 120

Fat per serving 3g

Mandarin Coconut Cream

When I first got this recipe, it called for making a crust. I took the time-saving, easy way out and sprinkled it with cookie crumbs instead!

1 (11-ounce) can mandarin oranges in light syrup, undrained
1/4 cup sugar
12 ounces sour cream
2 small boxes instant coconut cream pudding
1 (8-ounce) tub whipped topping
Any crispy cookie, about 10–15, coarsely crushed (almond, gingersnaps, c

Drain the mandarin oranges, reserving 1/2 cup syrup. In a large bowl, combine the syrup with the sugar, sour cream, and pudding mix; gently fold in oranges and whipped topping. Spoon into a 9 x 9-inch pan and cover; chill for at least 2 hours. Before serving, sprinkle with crushed cookies.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 228

Fat per serving 9g

Made-from-Scratch Lemon Crunch

This is so worth the effort—the coconut crust is what makes this dish extra delicious.

1/2 cup sugar
2-1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon salt
1-1/3 cups milk
1 egg, beaten
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon lemon zest
1 tablespoon butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Coconut Crust

1-1/4 cups shredded coconut
3/4 cup fine graham cracker crumbs
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup unsalted butter

Preheat oven to 400º.

In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Stir in milk and cook until thick, stirring constantly.

In a bowl, whisk the egg into the lemon juice. Stir a little of the thickened milk mixture into the eggs to temper, then pour everything back into the pan, mixing as you go. Cook and stir over low heat for 2 minutes; add lemon zest, butter, and vanilla; set aside.

Mix all crust ingredients together and press half of mixture into the bottom of an 8 x 8-inch pan. Pour in filling; top with remaining coconut mixture. Bake for 25 minutes, or until top is golden brown; chill and then cut into squares.

Serves 9

Calories per serving 468

Fat per serving 24g

Sunshine Orange Bread Pudding

Really good, really sweet, really special! I try to find egg bread on sale when making this wonderful old-fashioned dessert. The Sunshine Orange Sauce gives it extra yumminess!

3 eggs, beaten
1-1/3 cups sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1-1/2 cups orange juice
4 cups day-old bread cubes without crust (about 8 slices)
1/4 cup shredded coconut
1/4 cup golden raisins

Sunshine Orange Sauce

1/2 cup sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch
Dash of salt
1 cup orange juice
1 teaspoon orange zest
2 tablespoons butter

Preheat oven to 350º.

Mix together the eggs, sugar, salt, and orange juice in a large bowl. Add the bread cubes and toss to coat; lightly fold in the coconut and raisins. Pour into a 2-quart casserole and bake for 30 minutes. Increase temperature to 450º and bake for 10 minutes until the top is toasty brown. Serve warm with Sunshine Orange Sauce.

To make the sauce, mix together the sugar, cornstarch, and salt in a saucepan. Add the orange juice and zest. Bring to a boil and cook, stirring constantly, until smooth and thickened. Stir in 2 tablespoons butter until melted.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 384

Fat per serving 8g

Super Show-Off Chocolate Crêpes

When you want to impress guests, just say “oui oui!” to this delicious dessert. Once you’ve made the crêpes, you can eat them as is or decide what delicacy you want to fill or top them with!

1-1/2 cups whole milk
1 cup flour
1/4 cup cocoa powder
3 tablespoons powdered sugar
1 large egg
1 tablespoon butter, melted
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract or other favorite flavoring
1/8 teaspoon salt

Whisk together all of the ingredients until batter is completely smooth. Cover and refrigerate for at least 20 minutes. (Batter keeps refrigerated for 2 days.)

Liberally spray butter-flavored oil on the bottom of a nonstick 6-1/2-inch skillet or crêpe pan. Place pan over medium-high heat until you can see the oil barely starting to smoke. Remove from heat and add 2 tablespoons batter to the pan, swirling until the bottom is covered. Return to heat and cook crêpe for 1 to 1-1/2 minutes. The crêpe will start to look dry on top and around the edges. Loosen the edges with a spatula and then slide the spatula underneath and gently flip. Cook for at least 1 minute more and slide onto a plate to keep warm. Lightly spray pan in between making each crêpe.

Makes 15 crêpes

Calories per serving 64 (1 crêpe)

Fat per serving 2g

Variations: Try filling and/or topping your crêpes with peanut butter, marshmallow crème, Nutella, jam, honey, cream cheese sweetened with powdered sugar, fresh fruits, chopped nuts, toasted coconut, crushed cookies or graham crackers, pie filling, whipped cream, syrups (chocolate, caramel, berry coulis, maple), and/or a sprinkling of powdered sugar.

No-Fail, No-Fuss Cheesecake

The chopped walnuts in the crust give this easy cheesecake something special. It’s never cracked on me!

1/3 cup light brown sugar
1 cup flour
1/3 cup chopped walnuts
1/3 cup butter, melted
1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, room temperature
1/4 cup sugar
1 egg
2 tablespoons milk
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 325º.

Mix together the brown sugar, flour, and walnuts; pour the butter over top and stir until combined. Reserve 1/3 cup crumbs for topping; press the rest of the crumbs into a lightly greased 8 x 8-inch baking dish. Bake for 12–15 minutes. Beat cream cheese until smooth, then add the sugar, egg, milk, lemon juice, and vanilla. Continue beating until well combined. Pour over hot crust, sprinkle reserved crumbs over top, and bake for 25 minutes. Cool on a wire rack and cut into squares.

Serves 9

Calories per serving 296

Fat per serving 19g

Traditional Chocolate Nests

Fill these nests with little dollops of whipped cream, pudding, mousse, and a few gumdrops or jellybeans.

1/2 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
1 (5-ounce) can chow mein noodles

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and lightly spray with cooking oil. Pour the condensed milk into a microwave-safe glass bowl and stir in chocolate chips. Microwave on half power for 1–2 minutes, stirring every 15 seconds, until chocolate is completely melted. Pour chocolate mixture over noodles in a large bowl and toss until well coated. Drop mixture by half cups onto prepared baking sheet. Grease fingers and form each portion into a cup-shaped nest. Chill until ready to fill.

Makes 6 nests

Calories per serving 341

Fat per serving 15g

Frozen Desserts

Cherry Crunch Ice Cream

This sauce is so good you'll want to eat it right out of the bowl!

1 cup fresh sweet cherries, pitted
2/3 cup sugar
2 tablespoons flour
1/2 cup orange juice
1/3 cup water
1/2 cup chopped almonds
1 tablespoon butter
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 teaspoon grated lemon rind
Vanilla ice cream

In a medium saucepan, mix the cherries with the sugar and flour. Add the orange juice and water. Cook slowly and stir constantly until sauce thickens; add all remaining ingredients except ice cream and stir well. Serve warm or cold over vanilla ice cream.

Serves 6

Calories per serving 537

Fat per serving 25g

Chocolate Almond Ice Box Cake

Have the kids assemble this easy ice box cake. All you have to do is mix up the chocolate cream and let them do the rest!

2 cups heavy cream
6 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
6 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon almond extract
1/8 teaspoon salt
32 chocolate wafer cookies
Whipped cream, optional

In a bowl, combine the cream, cocoa, sugar, extract, and salt and then chill for 2 hours. Beat chilled mixture until stiff peaks form. Create four stacks of 8 cookies with the chocolate cream mixture between each wafer. On a serving platter, turn two stacks on their sides and lay end to end, spreading more cream mixture between the end cookies. Follow the same procedure with the two remaining stacks, setting them right next to the first stacks. Frost entirely with the remaining cream mixture. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Slice on the diagonal to serve and top with whipped cream, if desired.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 365

Fat per serving 26g

Cookies and Cream Sandwiches

Who doesn’t love an ice cream sandwich? Switch up the cookies, ice cream, and sprinkles for a never-ending combination of flavors.

8 soft and chewy bakery-fresh oatmeal cookies
1 cup vanilla ice cream, slightly softened
Chocolate sprinkles or finely chopped walnuts

Lay 4 cookies face down on a baking sheet. Scoop 1/4 cup ice cream onto each cookie. Press another cookie, bottom side down, onto ice cream and press slightly until ice cream is even with edge of cookies. Roll ice cream “edges” in chocolate sprinkles or nuts. Wrap each cookie sandwich individually and place in freezer until ready to serve.

Serves 4

Calories per serving 356

Fat per serving 14g

Creamsicle Yogurt Cups

Let the kids mix these up and enjoy a healthy dessert on a stick.

1 cup vanilla yogurt
1 cup water
1/2 cup nonfat dry milk
1/2 cup frozen orange juice concentrate

Mix together all of the ingredients. Pour into 3-ounce paper cups and place on a tray in the freezer. When mixture is partially frozen, insert a stick into the center of each and continue to freeze. When ready to serve, either peel off the paper cup or quickly dip in warm water and slide the cup off.

Makes 6 creamsicles

Calories per serving 69

Fat per serving <1g

Crunchy Fried Ice Cream

Sweet and crunchy—the perfect dessert combination!

1 package puff pastry (2 sheets)
1-1/2 teaspoons sugar
1-1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 quart vanilla ice cream
Canola oil
Honey

Preheat oven to 400º.

Thaw puff pastry as directed on package. Place on a lightly sprayed baking sheet and then sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon. Prick with a fork and bake for 12–15 minutes, or until light golden brown. Cool for 5 minutes; place in a plastic bag and crush coarsely. Transfer to a pie plate or flat pan. Using between a 1/2- and 3/4-cup scoop, form ice cream into balls and roll in pastry crumbs. Place on a baking sheet, cover, and freeze.

Heat oil to 375º. Fry the ice cream balls, turning constantly, for 10–12 seconds. Place in serving bowls and drizzle with a little honey.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 534

Fat per serving 40g

Frozen Almond Delight

This fabulous treat melts in your mouth, leaving a delightful nutty crunch—so light you can eat two!

1/2 cup nonfat dry milk
1/2 cup ice water
3 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1/4 cup finely chopped almonds or pecans

In a chilled bowl, beat the dry milk with ice water until stiff peaks form. Beat in the sugar, extract, and nuts. Place paper cupcake liners into a muffin tin and spoon mixture into each one until full. Freeze for 4 hours. When ready to serve, peel off paper and place on a plate.

Serves 4–6

Calories per serving 115

Fat per serving 4g

Lemonade Freezer Pie

Even though this recipe has been passed around for years, I wanted to include it in this collection. Nobody ever complains when this one hits the picnic table.

6 ounces frozen lemonade concentrate, thawed
4 ounces cream cheese, softened
7 ounces sweetened condensed milk
4 ounces frozen whipped topping, thawed
1 (9-inch) graham cracker crust

Pour the lemonade, cream cheese, and sweetened condensed milk into a blender and mix until smooth. Fold in whipped topping and pour into crust. Cover and place in the freezer until firm enough to get good, clean slices. If desired, sprinkle lemon or lime zest on top of filling before freezing. This recipe doubles easily.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 306

Fat per serving 15g

Lotus Cream

Unique and easy, and the perfect end to a hot and spicy Asian dinner.

2 cups plus 2 tablespoons sugar, divided
2 lemons, unpeeled and sliced very thin
Juice of 3 (more) lemons
1 quart milk
2 cups whipped cream

Mix together 2 cups sugar, lemon slices, and lemon juice and let stand for 1 hour. Dissolve remaining sugar in milk and then freeze until slushy. Add milk mixture to sugar and lemon. Mix in whipped cream and freeze.

Serves 4–6

Calories per serving 430

Fat per serving 8g

Piña Colada Pie

Make sure and have some Jimmy Buffet playing while enjoying this breezy tropical dessert.

3 ounces cream cheese, softened
1 tablespoon sugar
1 cup crushed pineapple, drained
1-1/4 cups shredded coconut
1/2 cup milk
8 ounces whipped topping
1 (9-inch) premade graham cracker crust

In a medium bowl, blend the cream cheese, sugar, pineapple, coconut, and milk for 30 seconds; fold in the whipped topping. Spoon into crust and freeze for at least 4 hours. Let come to room temperature before serving.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 246

Fat per serving 16g

Raspberry Mousse

Using frozen berries cuts the cleaning phase of fresh berries and saves you precious time.

1 small box raspberry gelatin
1 cup boiling water
1 envelope unflavored gelatin
1 tablespoon cold water
1 (16-ounce) package frozen raspberries, thawed
2 tablespoons sugar
1-1/2 cups vanilla ice cream
1 cup heavy cream
Whipped cream, optional

Dissolve the raspberry gelatin in the boiling water. Dissolve unflavored gelatin in the cold water. Puree the frozen raspberries in a blender. Add gelatin mixtures and sugar to the frozen berries and blend again. Add ice cream and cream, blending well. Pour into a wet 6-cup ring mold and freeze. To serve, unmold and let defrost for 15 minutes. Fill center with whipped cream, if desired.

Serves 6

Calories per serving 288

Fat per serving 17g

Strawberry Freezer Pops

Any kind of berry or peaches will work in this easy summer treat. Try substituting heavy cream for water if a richer taste is desired.

5 cups fresh strawberries
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
3/4 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1/2 teaspoon almond extract

Place all of the ingredients in a blender and puree. Pour mixture into a strainer and drain off liquid into a bowl; squeeze or press mixture to get all of the juice out and then discard the pulp and seeds. Divide juice into 10–12 (3-ounce) paper cups, place on a baking sheet, and freeze until slushy but not quite solid. Insert sticks in the center of each and then freeze until firm. When ready to serve, dip quickly into warm water, peel off paper, and eat.

Makes 10–12 pops

Calories per serving 42

Fat per serving <1g

Strawberry Sorbet

No need for fresh strawberries with just a quick turn in the blender!

2 (8-ounce) packages frozen strawberries
1 cup powdered sugar
1-1/2 lemons, juiced
Whipped cream

Turn a blender to low speed and drop frozen strawberries, one by one, through the hole in the lid. When completely blended, add powdered sugar and lemon juice. Blend for another 30 seconds. Pour into individual dessert cups and freeze until firm. Before serving, top with a swirl of whipped cream.

Serves 4–6

Calories per serving 109

Fat per serving <1g

Summer Chill-Out Granita

Granitas are the perfect way to enjoy fresh fruits. Follow this 4-step process and use your imagination to create your family's favorite flavor combinations.

3/4 cup sugar
3/4 cup water
2 cups cleaned and prepared fruit of choice
Extract or flavoring of choice, optional

Bring to a boil the sugar and water. Boil for 1 minute, stirring to dissolve sugar. Remove from heat; chill until cold.

Blend fruit until smooth. Add extract or flavoring to taste, if desired.

While fruit is still in the blender, add the sugar syrup and blend again. Pour mixture into an 8 x 8-inch or 9 x 9-inch pan and freeze for 1-1/2 hours.

Use a fork to scrape the mixture, breaking it up. Don’t forget the edges! Return to the freezer for at least 30 minutes. Remove from freezer and pulse briefly in the blender to make small ice crystals. Scoop granita into dishes and serve as is or with a drizzle of cream, if desired.

Serves 6

Calories per serving 139

Fat per serving <1g

Variations: Many different fruit and flavoring combinations work well in this recipe. Try strawberries and almond extract, watermelon and lemon extract, cantaloupe and orange extract, honeydew and lime extract, raspberries and chocolate extract, pineapple and cherry extract, or kiwi and coconut extract.

Summer’s Best Frozen Peach Pie

Use this recipe with whatever fruit is in season. It’s creamy and delightful and can be made in a jiffy. If not on sale, the can of sweetened condensed milk may push you over the $5 budget; however, you can make your own (see instructions in Author’s Note).

6 fresh peaches, peeled
1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
1 small container frozen whipped topping, thawed
1 (9-inch) graham cracker crust
Fresh fruit, optional

Chop the peaches and then mix with the condensed milk; fold in the whipped topping. Pour into the crust and freeze. Before serving, garnish with fresh fruit, if desired.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 369

Fat per serving 14g

Pies & Tarts

Banana Cream Pie

This classic pie is always a favorite.

1/3 cup flour
2/3 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 cups milk
3 egg yolks, beaten
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 (9-inch) baked pie shell
2 bananas

Preheat oven to 425º.

In the top of a double boiler, combine the flour, sugar, salt, and milk and cook until thick. Add a small amount of hot mixture to the beaten egg yolks to temper, and then stir entire egg yolk mixture back into the hot mixture. Cook for about 2 minutes, remove from heat, and then add butter and vanilla. Pour half of the cream mixture into the crust. Slice the bananas over the filling and then top with the remaining filling. Bake for 6–8 minutes. Let cool before serving.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 301

Fat per serving 13g

Can’t-Be-Any-Easier Apple Pie

This is a great “first recipe” for the inexperienced cook at your house.

6 apples, peeled and sliced (cut about 4 slices per quarter of each apple)
1 cup flour
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 egg, beaten
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup butter, melted
Sprinkling of cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350º.

Place apples in the bottom of a greased 9-inch pie pan. Mix together the flour, sugar, baking powder, egg, and salt; pour over the apples. Pour melted butter over top and sprinkle with cinnamon. Bake for 40 minutes.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 331

Fat per serving 12g

Cream Pie with Gingerbread Crust

If dates and raisins don’t appeal to you, simply skip the cream filling and fill this buttery crust with fruit and whipped cream.

Crust

24 gingersnaps
4 tablespoons butter, melted

Filling

1/3 cup flour
2/3 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 cups milk
3 eggs yolks, beaten
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup pitted, chopped dates or plumped raisins

Preheat oven to 375º.

Use a blender to pulverize the gingersnaps. Combine the crumbs and butter in a 9-inch pie pan and stir until all the crumbs are moistened. Spread over the bottom and up the sides and press down firmly. Bake in the middle of the oven for 8–10 minutes, or until crust is delicately browned. Set aside to cool and turn oven up to 425º.

In the top of a double boiler, combine the flour, sugar, salt, and milk and cook until thick. Add a small amount of hot mixture to the beaten egg yolks to temper, and then stir entire egg yolk mixture back into the hot mixture. Cook for about 2 minutes, remove from heat, and then add butter and vanilla. Pour half of the cream mixture into the crust. Sprinkle the dates or raisins over the filling and then top with the remaining filling. Bake for 6–8 minutes. Let cool before serving.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 388

Fat per serving 14g

Fruit Cobbler

This cobbler is good with whatever fruit is in season.

1 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
1 cup flour
1 cup milk
1/2 cup butter, melted
2 cups fruit of choice, cut into bite-size pieces

Preheat oven to 350º.

Mix together 1 cup sugar, flour, and milk.

Pour batter into a 9-inch round pan. Pour butter over batter. Combine fruit with remaining sugar and spread over top. Bake for 50–60 minutes. Serve warm.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 290

Fat per serving 12g

Granny’s Old-Fashioned Crumb-Topped Apple Pie

This is my grandma’s recipe, so it doesn’t have full measurements. Just follow the directions and you’re sure to come out with a delicious dessert!

2–3 apples, peeled and sliced (cut about 4 slices per quarter of each apple)
3/4 cup sugar
Dash of nutmeg
Butter
3 tablespoons water
1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 cup flour

Preheat oven to 325º.

Fill a greased 9-inch pie pan with apples. Sprinkle with sugar and nutmeg. Dot with butter and sprinkle water over top. Mix together 1/2 cup butter, brown sugar, and flour. Sprinkle the mixture over apples. Bake until brown, about 45 minutes, or until apples are soft.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 372

Fat per serving 11g

Kool-Aid Pie

This recipe wound up in my kitchen drawer, hand- written, no doubt from a friendly neighbor. I hope you enjoy its simplicity and pass it on as well.

1 (12-ounce) can evaporated milk
2/3 cup sugar
1 envelope Kool-Aid, any flavor
1 (9-inch) baked pie shell

Pour milk into a glass container and partially freeze; whip until fluffy. Add sugar and Kool-Aid; whip until stiff. Pour into pie shell, smooth, and freeze until firm.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 195

Fat per serving 6g

Lemon Pie

I just make the filling, sprinkle it with graham crackers, and top with whipped cream for a lazy hot day dessert.

1 cup sugar
2 egg yolks
Juice of 2 lemons
1 cup boiling water
2 tablespoons cornstarch
Grated rind of 1 lemon
Graham crackers, crushed
Whipped cream, optional

Mix together all of the ingredients except the crackers and whipped cream and cook in a double boiler until thick. Spoon filling into small bowls and sprinkle crackers over top. Serve with a dollop of whipped cream, if desired.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 195

Fat per serving 2g

Variation: Pour filling into a premade graham cracker crust and chill, covered, in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours or until pie is set.

Never-Fail Pineapple Cream Pie

This crust recipe easily makes three single-crust pies (or a double and a single). Just freeze the leftovers for another use.

Crust

4 heaping cups flour
2 teaspoons salt
2 heaping cups shortening
1/2 to 2/3 cup milk

Filling

1/3 cup flour
2/3 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 cups milk
3 egg yolks, beaten
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup crushed and drained pineapple

Preheat oven to 350º.

To make the crust, sift together the flour and salt; work in shortening with fingers until well blended. Use a spoon to blend in enough milk for dough to stick together. Place in refrigerator, covered, for 15 minutes before rolling out. Divide dough into three equal portions and freeze two of them for later use. Roll out dough to fit a 9-inch pie pan . When placing dough in a pie pan, use rolling pin to pick up dough to keep it from cracking.

In the top of a double boiler, combine the flour, sugar, salt, and milk and cook until thick. Add a small amount of hot mixture to the beaten egg yolks to temper, and then stir entire egg yolk mixture back into the hot mixture. Cook for about 2 minutes, remove from heat, and then add butter and vanilla. Pour half of the cream mixture into the crust. Sprinkle the pineapple over the filling and then top with the remaining filling. Bake for 10–12 minutes. Let cool before serving.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 407

Fat per serving 24g

No-Roll Chocolate Cream Pie

You've heard of press-on nails? Well, this is press-on crust!

Crust

1-1/2 cups flour
2 teaspoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup vegetable oil
2 tablespoons milk

Filling

1 small box instant chocolate pudding mix
1-3/4 cups cold milk

Preheat oven to 450º.

Combine all of the crust ingredients in a bowl; mix well. Press evenly into bottom and sides of 9-inch pie pan. Bake for 12–15 minutes.

In a bowl, beat together the pudding mix and milk for 2 minutes. Pour prepared pudding into pie crust. Refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 257

Fat per serving 16g

Cranberry Cream Cheese Shortbread Pie

This delicate crust is perfect for any cheesecake or cream pie filling.

Crust

2 cups Super-Easy Shortbread crumbs
1/4 cup powdered sugar
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons butter, melted
2 tablespoons honey

Filling

1 (14-ounce) can condensed milk
1/3 cup lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
1 (16-ounce) can whole cranberry sauce

Preheat oven to 350º.

In a bowl, combine the shortbread crumbs, sugar, and cinnamon.

In a separate bowl, combine the butter and honey and then add to the crumb mixture. Mix well and press onto bottom and sides of 9-inch pie pan. Bake for 5–6 minutes.

In a blender, blend the milk, lemon juice, vanilla, and cream cheese until smooth. Add cranberry sauce and blend again. Pour into cooled crust and freeze. Remove from freezer about 10 minutes before serving.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 513

Fat per serving 23g

Strawberry Cream

Served with or without a pie crust, this is equally delicious prepared with fresh raspberries, blackberries, or peaches.

3 cups sliced fresh strawberries
1/4 cup sugar
1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
1/4 to 1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 premade pie crust, optional

Mix the strawberries with the sugar and refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Pour strawberries into a colander to drain. Blend the cream cheese and powdered sugar until smooth; stir in the strawberries. Pour into a pie crust, if desired, or serve as is.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 164

Fat per serving 10g

Strawberry Ice Box Pie

This recipe can be used with any of your favorite summer fruits!

30–35 vanilla wafers
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 cup sweetened condensed milk
1 cup sliced, drained, and sweetened strawberries
1/2 pint whipping cream
Sugar, to taste
Vanilla, to taste

Reserve enough whole wafers to put all around the edge of a 9-inch pie pan. Crush the rest and sprinkle crumbs evenly over bottom of pan.

In a bowl, gradually add lemon juice to condensed milk, whisking until well blended. Add strawberries to milk and pour into prepared crust. Lay the whole cookies around the outside edge of the pie. Whip cream, adding sugar and vanilla to taste. Pile whipped cream on top of pie filling and place entire pie in refrigerator to chill.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 322

Fat per serving 18g

Vanilla Cream Pie with Graham Cracker Crust

This pie is so easy and oh so tasty!

Crust

3 tablespoons butter
1 cup fine graham cracker crumbs
1/4 cup packed brown sugar

Filling

1/3 cup flour
2/3 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 cups milk
3 egg yolks, beaten
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
Diced or sliced fruit of choice, optional

Preheat oven to 350º.

To make the crust, place the butter in a 9-inch microwave-safe pie pan. Microwave on high until melted, about 30 seconds to 1 minute. Add cracker crumbs and sugar; mix thoroughly. Press mixture firmly against bottom and sides of pie plate. Microwave on medium-high until hot, about 2–3 minutes. Cool completely before filling.

In the top of a double boiler, combine the flour, sugar, salt, and milk and cook until thick. Add a small amount of hot mixture to the beaten egg yolks to temper, and then stir entire egg yolk mixture back into the hot mixture. Cook for about 2 minutes, remove from heat, and then add butter and vanilla. Pour the cream mixture into the crust. Bake for 12 minutes. Let cool completely. Serve topped with fruit, if desired.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 352

Fat per serving 13g

Sauces, Frostings, & Dips

Browned Butter Frosting

This makes Barbara’s Best Banana Bars even better!

1/4 cup unsalted butter
1 (16-ounce) box powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 tablespoons milk, plus more if needed

In a saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter and heat until delicate brown. Remove from heat and mix in powdered sugar. Beat in vanilla and milk until frosting is smooth and spreadable. Top your favorite cake or bar, or just eat by the spoonful (it’s that good!).

Makes enough for a 2-layer cake

Calories per serving 221 (about 10 servings)

Fat per serving 4g

Citrus-Nutmeg Sauce

This sauce is a Banana Puff-Pie's best friend. It's also delicious drizzled over any apple dessert or spice cake.

1 tablespoon cornstarch
1/2 cup sugar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
1 cup water
2 tablespoons butter
Salt
Nutmeg

In a small saucepan, combine the cornstarch, sugar, lemon juice, zest, and water. Bring to a boil. Once boiling, stir for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add the butter. Season to taste with salt and nutmeg.

Makes about 1 cup

Total calories 632

Total fat 23g

Cream Cheese Frosting

Carrot cake or cupcakes only get better when topped with this delectable frosting.

1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup butter, softened
1 pound powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup flaked coconut, optional
1/2 cup chopped nuts, optional

Mix together the cream cheese and butter with powdered sugar until smooth. Stir in the vanilla and the coconut and nuts, if desired.

Makes enough for a 2-layer cake

Calories per serving 298 (about 10 servings)

Fat per serving 12g

Creamy Caramel Apple Dip

Nobody can say “no” to this dessert!

1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup brown sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 (12-1/4-ounce) jar caramel (or any flavor) ice cream topping
Nuts, optional
Apples, for dipping

Mix together the cream cheese, brown sugar, and vanilla; spread into a shallow bowl shape on a plate or in a pie dish. Pour ice cream topping into the center to fill. Sprinkle with chopped pecans or walnuts, if desired. Serve with sliced apples. If necessary, dip apple slices into orange juice to prevent browning.

Serves 8

Calories per serving 337

Fat per serving 10g

Sour Cream Frosting

This frosting is heavenly for any nut cake, especially the Maple Nut Cake.

1 cup sour cream
2 cups sugar
1/2 teaspoon maple flavoring

Boil the sour cream and sugar until mixture forms a soft ball. Remove from heat and chill. When cold, add maple flavoring and beat until creamy.

Makes about 1-1/2 cups

Calories per serving 205 (about 10 servings)

Fat per serving 4g

Thick Chocolate-Almond Sauce

From ice cream to Super Show-Off Chocolate Crêpes to a topping on cakes, this sauce is a winner!

1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
6–8 ounces semisweet mini chocolate chips
1 teaspoon almond extract
Chopped almonds, optional

In a glass bowl, microwave the milk on half power for 1–2 minutes or until hot. Remove from microwave and stir in chocolate chips until melted. Add the extract and, if desired, the almonds. If your sauce becomes too thick, thin it out with a little bit of corn syrup.

Makes 2 to 2-1/2 cups

Calories per serving 269 (about 8 servings)

Fat per serving 9g

Metric Conversion Chart

Volume Measurements	Weight Measurements	Temperature Conversion	
U.S.	**Metric**	**U.S.**	**M**
1 teaspoon	5 ml	1/2 ounce	1
1 tablespoon	15 ml	1 ounce	3
1/4 cup	60 ml	3 ounces	9
1/3 cup	75 ml	4 ounces	1
1/2 cup	125 ml	8 ounces	2
2/3 cup	150 ml	12 ounces	3
3/4 cup	175 ml	1 pound	4
1 cup	250 ml	2-1/4 pounds	1

About the Author

Angel Shannon has been cooking up delicious dishes and sharing culinary tips and fun entertaining ideas on radio and television for more than thirty years. She recently started her own company, Cooking with Angel, Inc., and is the author of Stick of Butter Cookbook. She lives in northern Utah. Check cookingwithangel.com for more great recipes and tips!